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#### NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM

The Grand Traverse Bay YMCA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **The Y Urges Healthier Habits for Kids during Childhood Obesity Awareness Month**

September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, and the Grand Traverse Bay YMCA is reminding parents about the importance of incorporating regular physical activity and healthier eating habits into their children's lives.

Childhood obesity rates have soared over the last few decades. Nationally, one in three children is obese or overweight, while 30.6% children in Michigan have also been affected by this epidemic, according to Robert Wood Johnson Foundation study. More alarming, obesity puts children at risk for chronic diseases often seen in adults, such as high cholesterol, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and type-2 diabetes. This health crisis sheds light on the need to provide children and their parents with the resources and the support they need, emphasizing that small steps can lead to big results to reverse the trend.

One key to fighting childhood obesity is prevention. Regular physical activity – 60 minutes a day for children – and nutritious foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grains can lower children's chances of becoming obese or overweight and developing chronic diseases. It's important to note that 60 minutes of physical activity can be achieved through a number of activities throughout the entire day – it doesn't have to be done all at once. As a leading nonprofit strengthening community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, the Y believes that getting kids more active and allowing them to play is an important factor in improving their health.

The Grand Traverse Bay YMCA offers programs such as Youth Working on Wellness (Youth WOW). These programs have helped youth ages 10 to 17 by educating them in nutrition and providing for an special exercise program.

"At the Grand Traverse Bay YMCA, we know that many families struggle to find the time and resources to eat healthier and set aside time for physical activity every day," said Tom Van Deinse. "So we tailor our programs to meet the needs of families in the community to help make the healthier choice an easier choice."

A new session for the fall session of Youth WOW begins on September 12. To learn more about the YMCA Youth WOW program, please contact Tom Van Deinse at 231-933-9622 or [tvd@gtbayymca.org](mailto:tvd@gtbayymca.org).